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Port OKs temporary facility for cruise ships at Terminal 91

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A building used to store chilled fruit will be converted to a temporary home for cruise ships at a Port of Seattle cargo terminal that seems ripe for redevelopment.

Yesterday, the Port of Seattle Commission approved a \$5 million plan to convert the 2-acre warehouse into an interim cruise-ship facility at Terminal 91, just south of the **Magnolia Bridge**.

The decision to go ahead with a temporary cruise terminal, officials said, would allow the port to make better use of a underused warehouse and serve cruise lines' interest in getting more berth space in Seattle.

The port built the chilled-fruit warehouse in 1985, expanding it to 80,000 square feet in 1992. Over the last few years, the fruit industry's switch to refrigerated containers made the port's chill facility obsolete.

Covering 150 acres, Terminal 91 includes two long finger piers, numbered 90 and 91.

The temporary cruise-ship facility will be located at Pier 90, where the port is also considering construction of a new Coast Guard facility.

For the last year, the port has been mulling the prospects of building a second cruise terminal, citing growth in the Alaska cruise market.

The port opened its first cruise-ship terminal two years ago at Pier 66.

The port decided to build an interim facility to accommodate cruise lines' interest in getting additional berth space by next year.

Terminal 91 is also being eyed as a prime redevelopment site for the port, which owns about 1,500 acres of property along Elliott Bay.

Real estate consultants Heartland and Berk and Associates are preparing a master plan for the terminal. Their analysis is independent of the cruise-ship plan, though cruise operations could influence the shape of whatever new development takes place there.

Set to open in April 2003, the cruise terminal will be relatively simple.

"This is a facility that focuses on function more than form," said port spokesman Mick Shultz. Construction is scheduled to start this summer.

Holland America Line has agreed to moor at the new terminal and other cruise lines have expressed interest, Shultz said.

The interim cruise terminal would operate until displaced by a new Coast Guard station or until a new permanent facility is built. A permanent facility may be built at Terminal 91 or elsewhere in the harbor, officials say.

The \$5 million plan includes limited improvements to the interior and exterior of the warehouse, parking, utility upgrades, and purchase of new passenger and crew gangways. The port previously agreed to spend \$520,000 for staff review, a market feasibility study and conceptual design.

Bermello, Ajamil & Partners did the market analysis and conceptual design. The Miami-based consultant also helped design the port's first cruise terminal at Pier 66.